

# Overcoming anxiety in English speaking

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## Annotation

This essay discusses the problem of speaking anxiety among English learners. It explains the main causes, such as fear of mistakes, lack of practice, and low self-esteem. The essay also describes the psychological effects of anxiety, including nervousness and loss of confidence. Several effective strategies are suggested to overcome this fear, such as developing a positive mindset, practicing regularly, and using relaxation techniques. The role of teachers and a supportive environment is emphasized as key to helping learners build confidence and improve fluency.

**Key words:** English speaking anxiety, fear of speaking, confidence, communication, fear of making mistakes.

In today's globalized world, English has become an essential language for communication, education and career development. However, many learners experience anxiety when speaking English, especially in public or academic settings. This anxiety can affect confidence, fluency and the ability to express thoughts clearly (Zheng, 2004)<sup>1</sup>. Understanding the causes of this fear and finding effective ways to overcome it are crucial steps toward becoming a confident English speaker.

One of the main causes of speaking anxiety is **fear of making mistakes**. Many learners worry about grammar errors, mispronunciations or incorrect word choices. They are afraid of being judged or laughed at by others, which creates mental pressure (Jamshidnejad, 2020)<sup>2</sup>. Another common reason is **lack of practice**. If learners only study grammar or writing but rarely speak, they may struggle to express themselves fluently in real conversations. Furthermore, **low self-esteem** and **negative past experience**, such as being corrected harshly, can make learners feel nervous whenever they need to speak English. (Curry & Maher, 2021)<sup>3</sup>

Anxiety can have strong psychological effects. Learners often feel their heart beating fast, their hand shaking or their mind going blank. They may forget words they already know or speaking too quickly and unclearly. This situation leads to a **vicious circle** – the more anxious a person feels, the worse they perform, which increases their fear next time (Zheng, 2024). Breaking this circle requires patience, motivation and a supportive environment.

## Effective Strategies to Overcome Anxiety

### 1. Positive mindset:

Accept that making mistakes is a natural part of learning. Even native speakers make errors. Focus on communication not perfection. A positive mindset helps reduce pressure and improve self-confidence. (Curry & Maher, 2021)

### 2. Regular practice:

Practice speaking every day, even for a few minutes. You can talk to yourself, record short videos or join online English clubs. The more you speak, the more natural it becomes (Jamshidnejad, 2020).

### 3. Breathing and Relaxation techniques:

Before speaking, taking a deep breath and relax your shoulders. This helps calm your nerves and control your voice better.

### 4. Build vocabulary gradually:

Sometimes anxiety comes from not knowing what to say. Learning useful words and expressions for daily situations helps you feel prepared and confident.(Jamshidnejad, 2020)

### **5.Find a Supportive partner or group:**

Speaking with friends, teachers or classmates who encourage you can make learning enjoyable. Positive feedback reduces fear and builds motivation.(Curry&Maher,2021)

### **6.Use technology:**

Modern tools like pronunciation apps, podcasts and speaking AI partners can help you practice privately and receive instant feedback.(Zheng, 2024)

Teachers and learning environments play a vital role in reducing anxiety. Supportive teachers who focus on encouragements rather than criticism create a safe space for students. Activities like role plays group discussions and storytelling can make speaking lessons more engaging and less stressful. A friendly classroom atmosphere builds trust and allows students to take risks without fear.

Overcoming anxiety in English speaking is not an overnight process. It requires time, effort and self-belief. By developing a positive attitude practicing consistently and seeking supportive environments, anyone can gain confidence in speaking English. Remember- confidence is not the absence of fear but the courage to speak despite it. Every word you say brings you one step closer to fluency.

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